

Tinsel Magazine Publishes Second Installment of "The Price of Winning" Four-Part Series

Part Two Examines How Coordinated Campaigns on Live-Ranking Platforms Deploy the Vocabulary of Harm and How That Deployment Can Be Distinguished from Real Harm

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tinsel Magazine has published Part Two of "The Price of Winning," its four-part series examining harassment, moderation, and the people who compete in public. Titled "The Bully Is

Whoever's Winning," the installment examines what the magazine describes as a recurring pattern on competitive live-ranking platforms, in which the vocabulary of harm can be deployed against creators who are performing well. According to the publication, Part Three publishes Monday and Part Four the following Wednesday.

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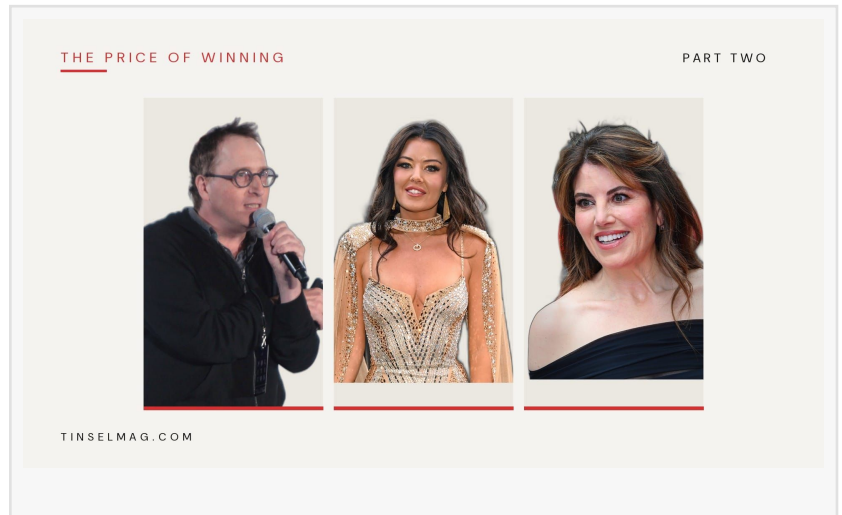
The strangest part is how fast you go from being everyone's favorite to the villain, and the only thing that changed is that you started winning.”

Jolene Burns

The article opens on what the publication describes as a recognizable maneuver. "A creator pulls ahead, and for a while the crowd enjoys it," Tinsel Magazine writes. "Then the lead holds, the underdog stops being an underdog, and the mood curdles." The publication writes that the same audience "that was cheering turns, and in the space of a week the person in front becomes arrogant where they were admired and a bully where they were a competitor, with the whole climb recast as something

nobody was ever supposed to take so seriously." The article notes that this shift "arrives at a telling moment, right around the time the scoreboard stops moving in the accuser's favor."

The magazine grounds the piece in the mechanics of the platforms themselves. "Competition is the product in these rooms," the article writes. "Platforms build them as contests, with live rankings and head-to-head formats that turn an ordinary night into a match with a visible winner." According to the publication, the people who enter these arenas "know the terms



before they play."

The article features singer-songwriter [Jolene Burns](#), who has climbed one of these live-ranking systems and, according to the publication, has felt the turn firsthand. "The strangest part is how fast you go from being everyone's favorite to the villain, and the only thing that changed is that you started winning," Burns tells the magazine. "Nobody warns you that doing well is the thing that makes people turn."

Tinsel Magazine's central argument is quoted directly in the article. Once the accusation of bullying "stops describing cruelty and starts describing a rival's success," the publication writes, "the word has become a tool, and the hand reaching for it usually belongs to someone with a stake in the outcome." The article writes that these are rarely disinterested bystanders and that they "more often" overlap with the type of coordinated campaign the series described in Part One. According to the publication, in this pattern "the pile-on wraps itself in the language of protection. The report that takes an account down is filed in the name of safety. The crowd organizing a removal calls the target the aggressor, and the concern surfaces on schedule, only once the target starts winning."

The magazine writes that the vocabulary is available for that use because it carries real weight. "The words carry weight because the injuries behind them are real, and the borrowed authority is the entire point of borrowing," Tinsel Magazine writes. According to the publication, "the reality of cruelty is precisely what makes the imitation of it contemptible, since the imitation works only by trading on the credibility that actual victims paid for."

The article situates the phenomenon inside a longer record of reporting on online shaming, citing journalist Jon Ronson's 2015 PBS NewsHour interview about his book on the subject. "We are destroying people routinely, daily," Ronson told PBS in 2015, per the article, "and destroying them with the thing we are most terrified would happen to us." The publication writes that the engine Ronson described "draws no distinction between a person who did something cruel and a person who simply got ahead."

The magazine identifies a specific tell for the pattern. According to the publication, "an objection that appears only once its owner starts losing is positioning, whatever else it calls itself." The article describes those objections as coming "from inside the game, from accounts that know every mechanic they have suddenly decided is immoral, from competitors who spent months or years learning to out-perform everyone in the room and then demanded the room be closed the instant someone out-played them." The publication writes that "the rules were fine while they were ahead. The morality arrives with the losses."

The article also frames a second dynamic layered on top of this. "An established group can recast a newcomer's success as bad behavior and route the objection through the report button," Tinsel Magazine writes, and the resulting effect is to "keep the arena comfortable for whoever already holds the top."

The magazine is explicit about what the piece is and is not claiming. "Cruelty is real and it is wrong, full stop," the article writes. According to the publication, "people do coordinate to make a stranger's life worse for sport, they do send the threats and the slurs, and that conduct is the actual harm this series exists to describe." The magazine writes that "the line that matters runs between being decent to people and being good at the game," and that the first "is a moral rule" while the second "is only a scoreboard." The article writes that "every time a sore loser borrows their vocabulary, the vocabulary means a little less the next time someone in real danger reaches for it."

The publication cites anti-bullying advocate Monica Lewinsky, drawing on her 2015 TED talk. "Public shaming as a blood sport has to stop," Lewinsky said in 2015, per the article, "and it's time for an intervention on the Internet and in our culture."

Tinsel Magazine closes the installment by setting up the next entry. The accusation, the publication writes, "is only the first half of the maneuver. The second half is the process that turns a coordinated crowd into a deleted account, and it runs with almost no human judgment in the loop."

The full feature is available now at Tinsel Magazine. You can read [Part One Here](#). Part Three of "The Price of Winning" publishes Monday and Part Four the following Wednesday.

Sources:

Jon Ronson, "How social media led to a 'renaissance' of public shaming," PBS NewsHour, 2015 - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/internet-led-renaissance-public-shaming?ref=tinselmag.com>

Monica Lewinsky, "The Price of Shame," TED, 2015 - https://www.ted.com/talks/monica_lewinsky_the_price_of_shame

ABOUT TINSEL MAGAZINE

Tinsel Magazine is a digital culture publication covering entertainment, style, internet culture, and the people shaping contemporary life. Based in Los Angeles, Tinsel publishes original editorial with a focus on the creative figures, cultural movements, and industry shifts that define modern media. The magazine's Tinsel Exclusive series profiles creators, artists, and cultural figures whose work is redefining their respective fields. For more information, visit <https://tinselmag.com/>.

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